

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A real-time communications system comprising:
2 a plurality of communications devices communicating with each other over a
3 network;
4 a central storage on said network storing presence and availability information
5 about system users, each of said plurality of communications devices being
6 identifiable with one or more of said system users; and
7 a screensaver on at least one of said communications devices, said screensaver
8 selectively displaying status information on a corresponding identified user, said
9 status information being filtered from said presence and availability information,
10 whereby said screensaver apprises viewers of current status of said corresponding
11 identified user.
- 1 2. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, wherein said presence and
2 availability information includes one or more policies identifying identity states for
3 display by said screensaver.
- 1 3. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, wherein said one or more
2 policies assign a host name identifying status information in said central storage with
3 said corresponding identified user.
- 1 4. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, further comprising a
2 presence and availability system, said presence and availability system filtering said
3 presence and availability information with said one or more policies and providing
4 said status information to said screensaver.
- 1 5. A real-time communications system as in claim 4, wherein said presence and
2 availability system periodically provides status updates to said screensaver.
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- 1 6. A real-time communications system as in claim 4, wherein said screensaver
2 periodically requests status updates from said presence and availability system.
- 1 7. A real-time communications system as in claim 4, wherein said central storage
2 is in said presence and availability system.
- 1 8. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, wherein said at least one of
2 said communications devices is a personal computer displaying said screensaver, said
3 screensaver running on said personal computer.
- 1 9. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, at least one other of said
2 communications devices receives user presence and availability input and provides
3 received said presence and availability input to said central storage.
- 1 10. A real-time communications system as in claim 1, wherein said network is the
2 Internet.
- 1 11. A method of automatically displaying real time status on communications
2 devices networked together in a real-time communications system, said method
3 comprising the steps of:
4 a) enabling a screensaver;
5 b) requesting current status;
6 c) passing said current status to said screensaver; and
7 d) displaying said current status in said screensaver on a local display.
- 1 12. A method as in claim 11, wherein said local display is a display for one of said
2 distributed communications devices and said method further comprises monitoring
3 said one for system activity.
- 1 13. A method as in claim 12, wherein the step (b) of requesting current status
2 occurs upon a system activity timeout.
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1 14. A method as in claim 12, wherein said local display is a display for one of said
2 communications devices and said method further comprises periodically returning to
3 step (b).

1 15. A method as in claim 14, wherein a period is set in said screensaver for
2 periodically returning to step (b).

1 16. A method as in claim 12, wherein said local display is a display for one of said
2 communications devices and said method further comprises returning to step (b)
3 responsive to an update indication from a presence and availability system.

1 17. A method as in claim 11, wherein passing current status information
2 comprises filtering centrally stored presence and availability data, filtered said
3 presence and availability data indicating current status for a user identified with said
4 local display.

1 18. A method as in claim 17, wherein said filters select what information is
2 provided as said status information.

1 19. A method as in claim 17, wherein said filters select how said status
2 information is displayed by said screensaver.

1 20. A computer program product for automatically displaying real time status on
2 communications devices networked together in a real-time communications system,
3 said computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having
4 computer readable program code thereon, said computer readable program code
5 comprising:

6 computer program code means for a screensaver, said screensaver monitoring
7 computer activity on a local computer and locally displaying information responsive
8 to an activity time out;

9 computer program code means for requesting information for display by said
10 screensaver; and
11

12 computer program code means for receiving remotely stored information
13 provided responsive to a request for said information for display.

1 21. A computer program product for automatically displaying real time status as
2 in claim 20, further comprising computer program code means for periodically
3 updating locally displayed information.

1 22. A computer program product for automatically displaying real time status as
2 in claim 20, wherein said computer program code means for requesting information,
3 requests information responsive to an update event.

1 23. A computer program product for automatically displaying real time status as
2 in claim 22, wherein computer program code means for requesting information
3 recognizes said update event as being one of an activity timeout, passage of a
4 scheduled period, expiration of an event and receipt of an update flag from a presence
5 and availability system.

1 24. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions,
2 the plurality of instructions including instructions which, when executed by a
3 processor, cause the processor to:

4 a) selectively display a screensaver on a local display, said screensaver
5 displaying local user status information;

6 b) receive requests for current status, current status requests originating
7 from said screensaver and from communications devices networked together in a real-
8 time communications system;

9 c) filter user presence and availability information, filtered said user
10 presence and availability information being current status for a respective user;

11 d) pass said current status to a respective one of said communications
12 devices for display on a local said screensaver; and

13 e) display corresponding said current status in said screensaver.

1 25. A computer-readable medium as in claim 24, wherein the step (c) filters said
2 user presence and availability information indicates what said screensaver displays
3 and how said status is displayed by said screensaver.

1 26. A computer-readable medium as in claim 25, wherein the current status passed
2 in step (d) is selected from the group of text messages including:

3 In a meeting from a meeting start time to a meeting stop time;
4 Out to Lunch;
5 On Vacation from a vacation start time to a vacation stop time;
6 Working from Home;
7 In a Meeting, Available for IM Communications;
8 Working Remotely, available for Telephone Communications; and
9 On a Business Trip, Periodically Checking e-mail.